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BOOK REVIEWS.

A Summary of the Vital Statistics of the New England States for the year 1892. Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1895. 8vo. pp. 59.

THIS pamphlet, compiled under the direction of the secretaries of the state boards of health of the six New England states, contains more solid and useful information for students of that most interesting social science, Demography, than is found in many a pretentious volume. A summary table on page 15 gives the marriage, birth and death rates, as well as the excess of birth rate over death rate in Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut for the twenty-year period, 1871-90. Comparison on all these points is made with the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Complete figures for all the New England states and for these foreign countries are also given for the year 1892.

This table discloses facts of fundamental social interest. Taking the twenty-year period, 1871-90, a sufficient length of time for regularities to manifest themselves, we find that the excess of birth rate over death rate in Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut is smaller than for any of the European countries mentioned, except France. The marriage rate during this period was higher in the New England states named than in any of the European countries, except Austria-Hungary. Maine and New Hampshire are omitted from the above summary, not because conditions are presumably any different there, but because registration is in both of these states a comparatively recent practice.

The facts cannot be impugned, and the lesson they teach is that as regards natural increase of population—the vital background to any social system—New England is moving in the same direction as France, whatever that may mean.

As regards death rates, New England occupies a middle position, her rate, generally speaking, being higher than the rates for Great

Britain and the Scandinavian kingdoms, but lower than amongst German and Romance-speaking peoples.

There are so many interesting facts in this pamphlet that the limitations of space forbid any but a superficial indication of the contents. The ages at which marriage is being consummated, the rate of divorce, the proportion of illegitimate births, mortality, by ages, from special diseases and according to urban and rural distribution, are a few of the topics of overwhelming social importance which have received succinct exposition.

Regarded from the technical standpoint, the report affords scarcely any basis for criticism. The most approved methods of calculation and of presentation have been adopted. Analyses are in some cases, perhaps, too bald, by which is meant that a clearer understanding of phenomena would be reached had the leading factors in a given situation been exposed. The writer at least believes that the statistician does not perform all his duty when he prepares tables of figures and outlines mere proportional relations in the text. With broader knowledge of the facts, and possessed of greater technical competency, he should pay some attention to causal connections wherever these can be reasonably established. Failure to do this leads to all sorts of unscientific inductions and brings statistical science into popular discredit.

The compilers have done well to make comparisons with foreign countries, but they have not carried this feature far enough. There is no reason why we should have a relative statement of illegitimate birth rates for New England and foreign countries and none for divorce rates. One would be favorable, the other unfavorable. So, again, the interest attaching to the valuable tables of urban general mortality and mortality from special diseases, largely preventable by improved sanitary control, would be greatly enhanced by the juxtaposition of figures from similar-sized European cities. The wider the range of comparative statement the weightier is the contribution to the growing science of Demography.

The motive actuating Drs. Abbott, Swarts, Lindsley, Hamilton, Watson and Young, in starting a publication which we are authorized to expect at five-year intervals, is worthy of highest praise. Demographic statistics are not merely valuable, they are invaluable. There can be no real sociological stock-taking without them. The existence of tendencies toward national progress or decay can best be disclosed

by their aid. Failure on the part of nearly all our states to provide efficient registration is little short of a scientific scandal. A worthy initiative has been taken. It remains for the scholarly public to become better acquainted with the work done by these enlightened secretaries of New England boards of health, and to seize the opportune moment to introduce registration and publication in the remaining states of the Union.

E. R. L. GOULD.

The American Historical Review. Vol. I, No. 1. New York : Macmillan & Co., October, 1885. 8vo. pp. 208.

THE establishment of *The American Historical Review* marks an important advance in that rapid development in the study of history, which has been so striking a feature of our recent academic life. The fraternal co-operation in its management of teachers in our leading universities shows that it is a national rather than a local enterprise. As such it justly appeals for support to all who are interested in history. Hitherto the students of history in this country have had no periodical which would bear favorable comparison with the great European journals. The first number of the new quarterly is dignified and scholarly in character, and its contents will interest not only the professional student, but also that somewhat evasive personality, "the intelligent reader."

Professor Sloane, in his inaugural article, discusses the influence of democracy on historical writing. Some have urged that the striving after social equality, and, in fact, the very atmosphere of a democratic society would lead students to lose sight of relative values in history and set them wandering in a labyrinth of details. While acknowledging that there is danger of this, Professor Sloane argues that it is not a necessary result. His article is interesting and suggestive, but the great variety of topics touched upon has made it hard for the reader to follow his train of thought.

The field of history, according to Professor Sloane, is the life of the state. This view still has many adherents, but it is, I believe, steadily losing ground. History cannot be limited to a record or a study of the political activity of man. It investigates properly every phase of the development of man in his activity as a social being. It studies not merely the life of states, but the life of ideas—not merely